

THE DRAMA;
OR,
THEATRICAL
POCKET MAGAZINE.

No. V.

MAY, 1823.

VOL. IV.

MR. BRAHAM.

“ If music gently breathing from the tongue,
Captives the ear, he must not pass unsung.”

“ He breathes such music, as, 'tis said,
Before was never made,
But when, of old, the sons' of morning sung.”
MILTON.

AT the head of the male vocalists of the English stage stands unquestionably the name of BRAHAM,—a name, the bare mention of which, immediately brings to the mind every thing synonymous with the very soul of musical harmony and melody. This country has, perhaps, never produced a vocal performer of such extensive powers as this gentleman: to a voice of the highest capabilities, he unites a deep and extensive knowledge of music, which gives him an easy and complete command over the resources of his art. His powers, so far from being like those of the most celebrated contemporary vocal performers, confined to a particular line, are of such a widely-

comprehensive nature, as to enable him to do justice to every species of composition, from the simple ballad to the most refined and scientific effort of musical skill. Previous to his appearance on the stage, it might be said, that the Italian performers had obtained (at least in public opinion) a monopoly of those delicate and difficult touches of the voice which are now become familiar, and can be employed, in some degree, by almost every member of a musical club, who aspires to the fame of giving pleasure to his companions. This ornamental style will, perhaps, in time, come into disrepute, and give way to that unambitious and bewitching simplicity, which constituted the great charm in the singing of our ancestors. If Mr. BRAHAM has any fault, it is a too great fondness for ornament; and, considering the amazing power and extent of his voice, we cannot much wonder that it should be so; in fact, he lays it on with so much profusion, that, at times, it is no easy matter to recognise the air in which he is engaged: but yet, however we might prefer a more unambitious style, it is difficult not to applaud, even without deriving great pleasure, from a voice of such astonishing compass and sweetness. As an actor, Mr. BRAHAM seems, like most vocal performers, to go through his part with the most lazy indifference; but the moment he begins to sing, he appears strongly to feel, and expresses with great power the sentiments conveyed in the poetry of the piece. There is one excellence in which he is unrivalled, and that is, in conveying the words to the ear of his audience. As a composer Mr. BRAHAM is equally happy, and has been particularly fortunate in adapting his productions to his own peculiar powers. His compositions in "*The Cabinet*," "*Devil's Bridge*," and numerous other operas, are universally known, and never does a season elapse without their being frequently brought before the town.

Previous to our concluding this notice, we shall offer our readers a few brief biographical anecdotes of this gentleman; and we cannot but observe, that a plain, honest diligence, a careful refinement of natural endowments, a firm respect for his own fame, and a complacent attention to the wishes of the public, these, engrafted in an ardent

desire to *excel*, have raised him to an eminence truly enviable.

Mr. JOHN BRAHAM (1) is the son of a respectable Jew who resided in the neighbourhood of Goodman's Fields; he became an orphan in his earliest years, but the care of a near relation prevented him from feeling the importance of his misfortune. The late celebrated LEONI of Old Drury, whose musical powers are by some yet remembered with delight, and who united with uncommon talents a truly philanthropic temper, beheld, in the friendless infant, a proper object for his protection. Under him, BRAHAM, at the age of twelve years began the study of music; and with such closeness of application did the natural bent of his genius prompt him to pursue his acquisitions, that he soon outstripped his patron's powers of instruction, and even surpassed him so far, as to become, in turn, his instructor. LEONI's songs acquired new graces from the suggestions of his extraordinary pupil. In truth, although endowed with an extreme correctness of ear, and an unrivalled tone of voice, (2) LEONI was by no means a profound musician; he possessed, however, the strength of judgment requisite to appreciate his own abilities, and liberally provided a more scientific and more suitable master to second the promising efforts of juvenile ability. The young songster when about fifteen (1784), made his first appearance at the Royalty Theatre, then under the management of JOHN PALMER, at which time there was a peculiar sweetness in his voice, to which he had added such expertness of execution, that he was able to accom-

(1) His proper name is ABRAHAM.

(2) LEONI's tone of voice was that which, by the *cognoscenti*, is termed a falsetto. Nature had imparted to it that quality of sound, which, in some other countries, the brutal ingenuity of enfeebled luxury has not scrupled to procure by the most cruel and ignominious methods,—a practice which debased the art that effected it. This unnatural custom is said to have been put a stop to in Italy during the predominance of the French: may it be finally abolished, and for the honour of human nature totally forgotten.

plish most of the bravura songs at that time sung by Madame MARA; but two years afterwards by the change in the vocal organs, which frequently accompanies the commencement of adult age, he was for some time deprived of every means of making further progress in public favour. Unfortunately at the same period LEONI, on account of domestic concerns, found it necessary to leave England for Jamaica, and young BRAHAM would, a second time, have been an orphan, had he not found shelter in the family of the GOLDSMIDS, to whose kindness he was much indebted. Under their auspices he became a teacher on the pianoforte, which produced him an income of 300*l.* a year. At a small musical party he was introduced to Mr. ASHE, the celebrated performer on the flute, who, struck with his abilities, persuaded him to accept the proffer of an engagement at Bath, where he made his appearance in the winter of 1794, and his first essay as a *tenor singer* at the concerts then conducted by that master of the musical art, RAUZZINI, to whose friendly, zealous, and judicious lessons, it is that the leading features of BRAHAM's excellence owe their form and name. The *character* which that master gave to the exertions of his powers has accompanied him through all his subsequent labours. His fame now re-echoed to the metropolis, and the ever-admired and ever-regretted STEPHEN STORACE was induced to take a journey to Bath on purpose to hear him. That sagacious observer quickly convinced of his merits, by consent of the managers of Drury Lane Theatre, made an engagement with him to sing for a limited number of evenings at that house, and he accordingly, in the spring of 1796, made his appearance in "*Mahmoud*," and rendered that year an epoch memorable to the public by the acquisition of so extraordinary a singer, "a phenomenon in the musical world." However, he considered his attainments and qualities unimportant, while there yet remained for him to seek in Italy the last and highest accomplishments of his talents. For this purpose, therefore, in company with Signora STORACE, he left England for the continent, and visited Paris, Florence, Milan, Genoa, and other places, and omitted nothing that might improve his musical skill. He then directed his route to Leghorn, Venice, Trieste,

and, finally, to Hamburgh, every where accompanied with the most gratifying applause and admiration. He returned to this country in 1801, in the winter of which having accepted an engagement from Mr. HARRIS, he appeared at Covent Garden Theatre in the opera of "*Chains of the Heart*." At this time he got great credit for several pieces of composition, particularly the music in "*Family Quarrels*," the "*Cabinet*," &c.; but Mr. KEMBLE, then acting manager, objecting to his singing some of his own songs for his own benefit, a violent quarrel ensued, and Mr. BRAHAM suddenly withdrew himself from that theatre, and went to Drury Lane, on which stage he has ever since continued to perform, and will most likely continue to do so till the end of his career. We shall now conclude this brief notice, trusting Mr. BRAHAM will long continue to contribute to our delight, and grace that stage, of which, in the vocal department, he is the brightest ornament. The following beautiful lines, by the author of "*Theatrical Portraits*," will not, we think, be an unacceptable wind up to our readers.

The sun had vanish'd, and the tints of day
On twilight's bosom lightly died away;
The star of eve was gliding into view,
And every flower seem'd bending 'neath the dew;
When in a bower, which CUPID's self had made,
APOLLO stood; and 'neath the roses' shade
New-strung his lyre; whilst LOVE, with silvery wings,
Flew to the bower, and breath'd along the strings;
Then SORROW came with downcast eyes of blue;
And PITY sigh'd, and stole along them too.
The lyre APOLLO seized, and LOVE's sweet tone
Dissolv'd in murmurs into SORROW's moan;
Which breath'd awhile along the strings he press'd,
And then expired on gentle PITY's breast.

Charm'd with the sounds, APOLLO's bright eye closes,
And sinks in sleep upon the dewy roses.
A wand'ring mortal near the spot had stray'd,
And caught the strains th' enamour'd god had play'd;
He saw th' immortal lyre, then softly crept,
And seized the treasure whilst APOLLO slept.

Yes ! BRAHAM stole the lyre of LOVE away ;
 At his command it breathes the sweetest lay
 That ever charm'd AFFLICTION of its fears,
 Or melted GRIEF to RESIGNATION'S tears.

Oh ! when thou dwell'st upon a tender theme,
 Thy voice recalls the bliss of "*Love's young dream* ;"
 But, when thou risest to a bolder strain,
 Forgotten glories seem to live again ;
 The sounds of sorrow die along thy breath,
 In "*Abercromby's*," or in "*Nelson's death* :"
 Yet still we trace a grandeur in its swell,
 That tells the soul how gloriously they fell !
 In pow'rs of voice and science thou art known
 To be unrivall'd ; and thy plaintive tone
 Glides thro' the heart, as sunbeams pierce the shade,
 And wakes compassion for the "*'Wilder'd Maid*."
 Oh ! still beguile affliction of its sighs,
 Breathe hopes of comfort where no comfort lies ;
 Charm the lone bosom of its cares awhile,
 And light the sunken cheek of sorrow with a smile !
H. S. V. D.

MR. I. P. KEMBLE.

[Resumed from page 170.]

Conclusion of Mr. COLMAN'S Preface.

" He feared he was the unhappy cause of their disapprobation ; he entreated their patience ; and hoped he should, shortly, gain strength, to enable them to judge, on a future night, what he handsomely termed the *merits* of the play. Here was friendship ! Here was adroitness ! While the public were testifying their disgust at the piece, through the medium of poor DODD, Mr. KEMBLE, with unexampled generosity, took the whole blame upon his own shoulders, and heroically saved the author, by so timely an interposition. I was charmed with this master-stroke, and, at the impulse of the moment, I thanked him. But, alas ! how narrow is the soul of man ! How

distrustful in its movements, how scanty in its acknowledgments, how perplexing to itself in its combinations! Had I, afterwards, looked on the thing simply, and nakedly, by itself, why the thing is a good-natured thing; but I must be putting other circumstances by the side of it, with a plague to me! I must be puzzling myself to see if all fits; if all is of a piece. And what is the result? Miserable that I am! I have lost the pleasure of evincing a gratitude, which I thought I owed, because I no longer feel myself a debtor. Had I abandoned my mind to that placid negligence, that luxurious confidence, which the inconsiderate enjoy, it had never occurred to me that Mr. KEMBLE, foreseeing, perhaps, that an aggrieved author might not be totally silent—stepped forward with this speech to the public, as a kind of *salvo* (should a statement be made) for his rigidity in the first instance. It had never occurred to me that Mr. KEMBLE was sufficiently hissed, yawned at, laughed at, and coughed down, to have made his apology *before* Mr. DODD appeared: it had never occurred to me, that his making his apology at a previous moment would have answered the same purpose to *me*, and not to *him*: it never occurred, in short, that there is such a thing as ostentatious humility, and a politic act of kindness; and that I should have waited the sequel of a man's conduct, before I thanked him for one instance of seeming good-will, close upon the heels of stubborn ill-nature, and in the midst of existing and palpable injury. The sequel will shew that I was premature in my acknowledgment; but before I come to the sequel, a word or two (I will be brief) to close my account of this, the first night's, eventful history. The piece was concluded, and *given out*, for a second performance, with much opposition.

“ Friends, who never heard the play read, shook their heads; friends, who *had* heard it read, scarcely knew it again: several, I doubt not, of the impartial, who chose to be active, actively condemned; and enemies, of course, rejoiced in an opportunity of joining them.

“ No opportunity could be fairer. The play was, at least, a full hour too long; and had *Job* himself sat to hear it he must have lost his patience. But if, gentle reader, thou possessest *Job's* quality, and hast followed

me thus far, in my narrative, it will appear to thee (for I doubt not thy retention and combination) that I was unable to curtail it effectually, at the proper time, the last rehearsal. I was, then, laid flat, my dear friends, as you remember I told you, by a fever. The acting-manager *did* attend the last rehearsals, and suffered the piece to be produced, *uncut*, to 'drag its slow length along,' surcharged with all his own incapacity, and all his opium.

"How, then, do I stand indebted, according to the articles of this night's statement? I owe to Mr. KEMBLE,

For his illness Compassion.

For his conduct under it..... Censure.

For his refusing to make an apology.... A smile!

For his making an apology A sneer.

For his mismanagement..... A groan.

For his acting..... A hiss.

This account is somewhat like the tavern-bill picked from *Falstaff's* pocket, when he is snorting behind the arras. There is but one halfpennyworth of compassion to this intolerable deal of blame.

"Now for the sequel. I have shewn, I think, that Mr. KEMBLE, in the first instance, undertook a duty which he *could* not perform: I have now to affirm, with all the difficulty of proving a negative full in my face, that he afterwards made a mockery of discharging a duty which he *would* not perform.

"After a week's interval, to give him time to recruit his strength, and the author time to curtail and alter the play (for the impression which the mis-manager and actor had contrived to stamp rendered alteration necessary), it was a second time represented.

"I must, here, let the uninformed reader into a secret; but I must go to Newmarket to make him understand me—no, Epsom will do as well, and that is nearer home.—It often happens, at a race, that a known horse, from whom good sport is expected, disappoints the crowd by *walking over his course*. He does not miss an inch of the ground; but affords not one jot of diversion, unless some pleasure is received in contemplating his figure. Now, an actor can do the very same thing. He can *walk over his part*; he can miss no more of his words than the horse

does of his way; he can be as dull, and as tedious and as good-looking as the horse in his progress. The only difference between the two animals is—that the horse brings in him who bets upon him a gainer; but the luckless wight who has a large stake depending upon the actor, is, decidedly, certain to lose. There is a trick too, that the jockies practise, which is called, I think, *playing booty*. This consists in appearing to use their utmost endeavour to reach the winning-post first, when they are already determined to come in the last. The consequence is, that all, except the knowing ones, attribute no fault to the jockey, but damn the horse for a sluggard. An actor can *play booty* if he chooses; he can pretend to whip and spur, and do his best, when the connoisseur knows, all the while, he is shirking; but sluggard is the unmerited appellation given by the majority to the innocent author.

“ Mr. KEMBLE chiefly chose to be the horse, and *walked over the ground*. Every now and then (but scarcely enough to save appearances) he gave a slight touch of the jockey, and *played booty*. Whether the language which is put into the mouth of *Sir Edward Mortimer* be above mediocrity, or below contempt, is not to the present purpose: but the words he is made to utter certainly convey a meaning; and the circumstances of the scenes afford an opportunity to the performer of playing off his mimic emotions, his transitions of passion, his starts, and all the trickeries of his trade.

“ The devil a trick did Mr. KEMBLE play but a scurvy one! His emotions and passions were so rare, and so feeble, that they seasoned his general insipidity, like a single grain of wretched pepper thrown into the largest dose of water-gruel that ever was administered to an invalid. For the most part he toiled on, line after line, in a dull current of undiversified sound, which stole upon the ear far more drowsily than the distant murmurings of Lethe, with no attempt to break the lulling stream, or check its sleep-inviting course.

“ Frogs in a marsh, flies in a bottle, wind in a crevice, a preacher in a field, the drone of a bagpipe, all, all yielded to the inimitable and soporific monotony of Mr. KEMBLE!

"The very best dramatic writing, where passion is expressed, if delivered languidly by the actor, will fail in its intended effect; and I will be bold enough to say, that were the *curse in King Lear* new to an audience, and they heard it uttered, for the first time, in a croak, fainter than a crow's in a consumption, it would pass unnoticed, or appear vapid to the million.

"If I raise a critical clatter about my ears, by this assertion, which some may twist into a profanation of SHAKSPEARE, I leave to HORACE, who can fight battles better than I, to defend me.

'Si dicentis erunt fortunis absona dicta,
Romani tollerit pedites equitesque cachinum.'

"That Mr. KEMBLE did not misconceive the part, is certain; for he told me, some time before the play was acted, that he feared the exertions requisite, in *Sir Edward Mortimer*, would strain his lungs more than *Octavian*, in the '*Mountaineers*.'

"That he can strain his lungs, to good purpose, in *Octavian*, is well known; and, after this, his own intimation, how will he escape the charge of wilful and direct delinquency, when, with such conception of the part, and with health recovered, he came forward in the true spirit of *Bottom*, and '*aggravated his voice so that he roar'd you as gently as a sucking dove*?'(1) He insulted the town, and injured his employer and the author sufficiently in the first instance; in the second, he added to the insult and injury a hundredfold; and as often as he mangled the character (three or four times, I am uncertain which, after the first night's performance), he heaped aggravation upon aggravation.

"The most miserable mummer, that ever disgraced the walls of a theatre, could not have been a stronger drawback than Mr. KEMBLE. He was not only dull in himself, but the cause of dulness in others. Like the baleful *Upas of Java*, his pestiferous influence infected all around him.

(1) Mr. KEMBLE informed me, previous to the second representation of the play, that he felt himself capable of exertion.

When two actors come forward, to keep up the shuttlecock of scenic-fiction, if one plays slovenly, the other cannot maintain his game.

“ POOR BANNISTER, Jun. would he speak out (but I have never pressed him, and never shall press him to say a word upon the subject) could bear ample testimony to the truth of this remark. He suffered like a man under the cruelty of MEZENTIUS. All alive himself, he was tied to a corpse, which he was fated to drag about with him, scene after scene, which weighed him down, and depressed his vigour. Miss FARREN, too, who might animate any thing but a soul of lead, and a face of iron, experienced the same fate.

“ I could proceed, and argue, and reason, and discuss, and tire the reader, as I have tired myself (it is now, my good friend, one o'clock in the morning), to prove, further, that Mr. KEMBLE was unsound in my cause, and that he ruined my play; but I will desist here. I think I have *prosed* enough to manifest that my arguments are not unfounded.

“ They who are experienced in *dramatics* will, I trust, see that I have made a fair *extenuation* of myself; they who are impartial will, I hope, be convinced that I have set down *naught in malice*.

“ The only question that may arise to shake, materially, the credit of all I have said, is, ‘ How is it probable that Mr. KEMBLE should injure you thus without provocation? Is it in nature? Is it in man?’ I can merely answer, that I am unconscious of having given him cause for provocation: that if I have given him cause, he has taken a bad mode of revenge; that Mr. KEMBLE's nature has frequently puzzled me in my observation upon it; and that I think him a very *extraordinary man*.

“ But let him take this with him, should this crudely-written preface ever fall in his way, I have committed it to paper *currente calamo*. I mean no allusion, no epithet, to apply to him as a private individual. As a private individual I give him not that notice which it might, here, be impertinent to bestow; but I have an undoubted right to discuss his merits, or demerits, in his public capacities of manager and actor; and my cause of complaint gives me a

good reason as well as a right. His want of conduct, his neglect, his injustice, his oppression, his finesse, his person, his face, are in this point of view all open to my animadversion.

‘ He is my goods, my chattels ;
My horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing.’

And I would animadvert still further, did I not think I had already said sufficient to gain the object of guarding my own reputation. That object has solely swayed me in dwelling so long upon a ‘ plain tale,’ encumbered with so strutting a hero as JOHN KEMBLE.

“ ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

“ I am indebted for the ground-work of this play to a novel entitled ‘ *Things as they Are; or, the Adventures of Caleb Williams* : written by WILLIAM GODWIN.’ Much of Mr. GODWIN’s story I have omitted; much, which I have adopted, I have compressed; much I have added; and much I have taken the liberty to alter. All this I did that I might fit it, in the best of my judgment, to the stage.

“ I have cautiously avoided all tendency to that which, vulgarly (and wrongly, in many instances), is termed politics, with which, many have told me, ‘ *Caleb Williams*’ teems.

“ The stage has, now, no business with politics; and, should a dramatic author endeavour to dabble in them, it is the Lord Chamberlain’s office to check his attempts, before they meet the eye of the public. I perused Mr. GODWIN’s book, as a tale replete with interesting incident, ingenious in its arrangement, masterly in its delineation of character, and forcible in its language. I considered it as right of common, and, by a title which custom has given to dramatists, I enclosed it within my theatrical paling. However I may have tilled the land, I trust he discovers no intentional injury to him, in my proceeding.

“ To all the performers (excepting Mr. KEMBLE) I offer my hearty thanks for their exertions; which would have served me more, had not an actor, ‘ *dark as Erebus*,’

cast a gloom upon them, which none of their efforts, however brilliant, could entirely disperse.

" But this does not diminish my obligations to them : so much, indeed, I owe to them, that, when the play was last performed, it was rising, spite of *Erebus*, in favour with the town. It was then advertised, day after day, at the bottom of the play-bills for repetition, till the promissory advertisement became laughable ; and, at length, the advertisement and play were dropt altogether.

" If, after the foregoing preface, I should, at a future period, bring the play forward in the Haymarket Theatre, I am fully aware of the numbers, who, from party and pique, may now oppose it. I am aware, too, of the weight which a first impression leaves upon the minds of the most candid : still, so strong is my confidence in the genuine decision of a London audience, who have a fair opportunity of exercising their judgment and feelings (which they have not had, yet, in respect of this play), that I believe I shall venture an appeal.

" The piece is, now, printed as it was acted on the *first night* ; that they who peruse it may decide whether, even in that shape (with all the misfortunes, before enumerated, with which it was doomed to struggle), it should be, for ever, consigned to moulder on the shelf.

" The songs, duets, and chorusses, are intended merely as vehicles for musical effect. Some critics have pompously called them *lyric poetry*—that by raising them to dignity they may more effectually degrade them : as men lift a stone very high, before they let it fall, when they would completely dash it to pieces.

" I, now, leave the gentle reader to the perusal of the play—and, lest my father's memory may be injured by mistakes ; and, in the confusion of after-times, the *translator of Terence*, and the *author of The Jealous Wife*, be supposed guilty of the *Iron Chest*, I shall, were I to reach the Patriarchal longevity of Methusaleh, continue (in all my dramatic publications) to subscribe myself

" GEORGE COLMAN, THE YOUNGER.

" *Piccadilly, July 20, 1796.*"

[*To be resumed.*]

MR. I. P. KEMBLE.

[*The following lines were written three months ago, by HARRY STOE VAN DYK, the author of "Theatrical Portraits," and are not to be found in that volume.*]

The proudest of the Romans, where is he?

The hero of Corioli, (1) who fell

Amidst his enemies, in majesty,

Like some high tower, or mighty citadel,

Sinking among the foes who storm its wall,

Grand in its ruin, noble in its fall.

And where is he, whose evil spirit stole

At midnight to his tent? (2) And he, (3) whose soul

With fortitude and stoic firmness bore

The tidings of his son's untimely doom,

Yet sank at last, and sank to rise no more,

With the departing glories of lost Rome?

Where, where are they? Alas! they once *have been*,

But vanish'd, died, when KEMBLE left the scene:

No more he strikes beholders' hearts and eyes

With all the lightning of his energies;

No longer sways the rabble with his nod,

Nor stands at Velscium—towering like a god.

With valorous might, which hostile force disdains,

No more he thunders o'er Philippi's plains;

Nor charms the breathless senate with th' intense

And soul-felt magic of his eloquence.

Yet will he live when many a loftier name

Shall seek the nothingness from whence it came;

And when that noble form shall coldly rot

In death's embrace, unnoticed and forgot,

The recollection of his worth will be

A fadeless halo round his memory.

Mind rests upon itself—this mortal clay,

This dross of being, may with time decay;

(1) Coriolanus.

(2) Brutus.

(3) Cato.

But, as it mingles with its parent earth,
The *mind* from heaven receives a second birth. (1.)

Methinks I see him as the aged *Lear*,
Crown'd with the wild sublimity of grief :
So does the monarch of the woods appear,
When storms have left him neither bough nor leaf.

Methinks I view him as *De Montfort* now,
With frenzied gesture and convulsive start,
Despair and terror on his pallid brow,
Remorse, and guilt, and anguish in his heart.
Oh, thought ! forget the horrors of that sight,
Which froze the crimson current of the blood !

Lo, *Hotspur* comes impatient for the fight,
And wild and daring as a mountain flood,
That thunders to the vale with mighty shock,
Unchecked by rugged trunk or broken rock.

The scene is chang'd, the vision has departed,
And Denmark's melancholy prince appears,
Nursing pale thought, and almost broken hearted,
To call down Pity from her throne of tears,
And ope the genial springs of sympathy
That lie within the desert of the breast.

But mark, *Leontes* next, whose jealousy,
(E'en as the poisonous viper seeks the nest
Of some fond bird to ravage and destroy,)
Makes desolate the dwelling of his joy.

Again the scene is chang'd, for *Wolsey* stands,
And gives with feeble voice his last commands ;
A beacon placed amidst the stormy waves
Of grandeur's sea, to warn ambition's slaves.

Behold reclined the ever-musing *Jaques*,
Whose soul with forests, mountains, vales, and lakes,
Holds free communion, and is deep imbued
With all the luxury of solitude.

(1) This idea is taken from SIMEON STYL, a Dutch poet of the eighteenth century, who says,

“ Als't lichaam sterft, dan wordt de ziel herboren.”
Whene'er the body dies, the soul is born again.

Where is *Penruddock* ? Where the brave *Macbeth* ?
 The hardy *Richard*, dauntless even in death ?
 Where now the *Stranger* ? Where the guilty *John* ?
 And, last and best, where *Posthumus*, who won
 The spotless heart of slander'd *Imogen* ?

Alas ! they live in memory's page alone,
 And are no more, save in the minds of men ;

We see, we hear them not, for *he* is gone,
 Who, with the chain of vast conception drew
 Past ages back upon us, and who knew
 To charm to life the images sublime,
 That lay unheeded 'neath the waves of time.

Yes ! he is far from England, and from those

Who once have seen, and never can forget
 The sun of tragedy that brightly rose,

The sun of tragedy that grandly set.

Oh ! may his mind, in calm retirement, gaze
 " Thro' the long vista of departed days,"
 And all the honours he obtained before,
 Come back, like sweet reality, once more,
 To soothe the thoughts of retrospective age,
 And cheer the close of life's brief pilgrimage ;
 Then shall MELPOMENE bewail his doom,
 And strew her leaves of cypress round his tomb,
 And, sighing, say, whilst mourning KEMBLE's fall,
 " This was the noblest Roman of them all !"

DRAMATIC REFLECTOR.

No. VII.

*Consisting of Observations, &c. original and selected, on
 Matters connected with the Stage.*

BY J. W. DALBY.

18.—ON THE HAMLET OF SHAKSPEARE.

He rushes into the great masquerade, and is dazzled,
 and heated, and bewildered, till he becomes as wild as all

around him, tosses off the draught, joins in the chorus of fantastic and hollow joy, is for a time the madman that he seems; but the solitary hour comes and restores his mind. He is the reveller let out into the midnight; all is sudden coolness and sublimity, the sounds and healing breath of night, the immensity and the stars of heaven. The "*gracious Prince*" is loved more than all the kings and heroes of SHAKESPEARE'S mighty imagination. The spell is in his nature; his dejection of spirit, his defrauded right, his thwarted love, bring him closer to the common lot, and with it the common sensibilities of our being. The stern and magnificent elevation of those characters that rise and darken above men, like mountain fortresses, have no power on the heart like the ruin of the palace in the valley, the remnant of things glorious in their day, the place of beauty and of song, a wilderness filled only with the weedy luxuriance that attests the ancient fertility of the soil, and here and there some knot of choicer beauty, the last delicious relic of the bower.

Hamlet binds us to him by his generous irresolution, by his tender misanthropy, by his weariness of life, by his awe of the grave. It required great genius to have produced a character interesting from its very defects. There is, perhaps, no other instance of this noble conversion of weakness into strength, the transmutation of the dross of the human heart into its most precious ore. With a nobler power than his who built the pyramids, our great bard has erected out of the dust and slime of the moral soil a monument as imperishable as the eternal works of *Nature*.

19.—HINTS FOR THE FORMATION OF ANOTHER HAMLET.

Another *Hamlet* might be found, and the poet who forms it in rival beauty will eclipse all the names of our day. He might have the same princely faculties, the same tendency to melancholy, the same original tenderness; but the decided development of his propensities might be combined with a more obvious obligation and necessity of circumstances. The early sunshine of his spirit might be gradually darkened by powerful disasters, the vigour of his nature might be forced into action by suffering, like the

eagle uttering a louder cry, and spreading a broader wing as the storm whirled him,—a man of mighty mind, but shewing its magnificent proportions only as the evil elements stripped it of its robe. The glories and the joys of life disappearing like visions from before him; all that looked rest and security washing away from under his feet; nature seeming to withdraw from him, and this intellectual giant, like the last man in the Deluge, standing in his melancholy and terrible grandeur alone, the solitary combatant of the storm, that had overwhelmed all beneath, and which was to make him only its last and mightiest victim.

20.—ON THE CANT RELATIVE TO THE IMMORALITY OF THEATRICAL AMUSEMENTS.

In defiance of timid, short-sighted moralists, and the more furious attacks of the puritan and methodist, I trust that theatrical amusements will yet flourish with renovated vigour and luxurious elegance. In the ardour of mistaken, though, I believe, *sometimes*, well-meaning zeal, the declaimers now under consideration do not remember that *the desire of pleasure* is a natural, and if not intemperately indulged, a rational principle, which, for wise purposes, has been implanted in the breasts of us all. Heaven preserve us from yielding to the fools who represent that it is unlawful to laugh, and criminal to pretend to be happy; this is an impious idea, which would represent the benevolent Disposer of the Universe as a tyrant, and man as the victim of a severe anticipating destiny,—an idea which could only have entered an imagination clouded by Calvinistic despair, and impervious to the soft rays of hope and mercy. But supposing that the doors of our theatres could be closed, I fear that the divine and the philanthropist would have gained an inglorious and ineffectual victory, by driving the promiscuous multitude of a crowded metropolis to the styes of sensuality and drunkenness, or the recesses of secret sin. But though we may treat with calm contempt more noisy yet less able combatants, we must not deny or forget the merit of COLLIER, and some who followed him. These attacked and drove from the

stage those impious raileries and obscene allusions, injurious to correct amusement, and disgraceful to national taste, which tainted the dramas of the day, and which too often sully the witty pages of WYCHERLY, CONGREVE, FARQUHAR, and VANBURGH.

We know how very easy it is from the abuse to argue against the temperate use of an innocent and (properly conducted) a moral amusement; for, does it at all follow from reason, or the nature of things, that the avenues of our theatres must on every side be surrounded by the noisome and polluted dens of prostitution, infamy, and fraud? Surely a well-constructed and efficient police might prevent all this?

21.—LARGE THEATRES.

The alterations which Mr. ELLISTON has lately effected in the interior of Drury Lane Theatre, though not, in *one* respect, carried to their full and proper extent, are entitled to the highest praise. Formerly, when the critic and dramatic amateur were seated in the brilliant magic circle, to enjoy that, for which most rational men visit a theatre, they found that comfort and the pleasure of distinctly hearing what was said on the stage had been wholly sacrificed to architectural grandeur and vastness of space,—a space, which the woeful experience of past seasons has feelingly told the managers is never, but on the rare occasion of some peculiar temporary stimulus, adequately occupied. Is it not strange that, without paying so dearly for their knowledge, they could not be taught that there is a degree of space, accurately determined by reason and experience, beyond which the human voice, however artificially assisted, or violently strained, cannot, with efficacy, reach? How much soever the rapture of an immense receipt may seize the imagination, or tempt the avarice of a manager, he ought never to lose sight of the prior claims of the public to comfort and amusement, or he will be often obliged to exhibit his gilded lattices, his stuccoes, his pilasters, his processions, his cavalcades, his laughing tragedies and crying comedies, to empty benches; whilst the few, who are so unlucky as not to be entrapped by the

gaudy puppet-shew, will suffer mischiefs not easily remedied, from damp space unoccupied, and from freezing currents of air; and all they have in return, is a view of apparently dumb actors, whom they may like to *see*, but, with the exception of the fiddlers, cannot possibly *hear*.

January 22, 1823.

FLORES HISTRIONICI.

X.—ICYNTHE.

BY SAMUEL L. BLANCHARD.

Scene—the Ruins of a Grecian Temple.—Enter EUCELION.

Euc. Heard I not sounds? sounds like the richest tumult
O'er striving waters, when the sense is fill'd,
And borne above the instrument of song!
I felt my soul departing, and the death
Of that loud voice a hundred echoes mourned.
'Twas not of earth, and yet it sprang amidst
These ruins! Then a solemn tone was heard,
Smooth as the silence into which it died,
Whispering of life, and breathing o'er the heart
A thrilling mockery, as if the hand
That ruled that world of melody, and gave
Its lightest pressure to the strings that woke
The soul of love, and spread its spirit thro'
This air of beauty and of night, had sunk,
Unconscious, by the side of some sweet form,
Born of the moonlight, and as chaste as it.
No sound is here: no harp, no voice, no form,
Rests in the wordless grandeur that is flung
Like a mute dream about me. I am lost;
I view this scene with wonder, and an awe
Creeps on my limbs, and tells me I am mortal!
Ye once proud columns, and ye scattered shrines,
Ye broken emblems of unburied fame,
How grand ye rose, how beautiful decline!
Ye sculptured forms of marble, scarce less real
Than those who lived, your breathing likenesses,

Ye perish silently, unmourned by men ;
Yet skies weep o'er ye, and the unborn hours
Shall pity while they doom ye to decay !
Here all of greatness and of glory dwelt,
Whose names die not with marble, but are hung
In thoughts of immortality ; and those
Who fought and fell upon the hallowed field,
Where freedom rose above the blood-sprung vapours,
And those who filled the cloud-girt minds of men
With truth, and might, and grandeur, such as shine
On god-like aspects, and in god-like hearts,
Are imag'd in these marbles, which once wore
A charm that spoke of sense and soul beneath,
But veiled o'er by sleep all cold and dreamless ;
And yet it seemed not death like that which man
Drew on his fellow. *(Low music is heard.)*

Soft, oh ! lips and heart
Yield to that sound ! It rises there, and bows
My soul to its fine power, as it spreads
Delight on earth and air, whereof it comes.
Oh, night, how still thou art ! Oh, sky, how pure !
And this, the voice of one that dwelleth there,
Is purer and more gracious. I could die :
Oh, let me die and gaze on sparkling forms,
And see the spirit that destroys my mind
With more than music, for it must be bright
And lovely as the climes which it inhabits !
I sleep, or in the beauty of yon beam
These wild eyes trace a being which my thoughts
Had shaped thus heavenly : it moves, and yet
The impure earth it presses not, but glides
Happy, and robed in holiness, and lips,
Not as the lips of woman are, but hued
With more of loveliness, breathe on the night ;
And eyes not lit by passion, yet more rich
Than gem-crowned depths, washed by the glittering wave,
Are bent towards me. This, ah ! this is real ;
Or, if I sleep, sleep is of heaven and love,
For never o'er the waking sense can creep
A thrill more true than mine !

(The figure of a beautiful female, which EUCELION

had perceived at a little distance, advances to a broken column near which he is standing.)

My heart is touched

With fear that quivers not, nor my warm cheek
Makes bloodless ; I will speak—yet, should my words
Startle the noiseless shadow from its haunt,
As night-dreams tremble into space, whene'er
The air's wild sigh but sounds its warning—no,
Let me gaze silently, for with those eyes,
My heart, thou too wilt perish !

(The music ceases, and the figure remains motionless.)

The tone falls

Slow to its rest, and yet its mistress keeps
Her fine attraction thro' me, and the heart-spell
Grows with the light that formed it ; light that streams
From eyes whose lids could shroud it not : the charm
Hath too much truth to die upon a word,
One word of life—the longing of my soul
My lips shall lightly breathe.—Star of the skies,
Spirit of other worlds, who com'st in form
Earthless, and fairer than the night that's o'er thee,
Who seem'st the creature of a faithless thought,
Shaped in an unreal print, yet holier far
Than all reality's bright life-proud forms,—
Speak to a mortal, one whose voice doth dare
To ask the import of thy coming—speak !
A clay-stampt being seeks to win a sound
From lips whose young bloom is unkiss'd. Oh, speak !
By the clear heav'n, of which thou art a part—
By love of which thou art the spirit—by
The clime thou dwellest in, and by the air—
By night and by the stars—by the still sleep
That covers this dim world—by all the looks
Of angels upon men, and by their hearts,
Their smiles and feelings, spirit, speak to me !

Spirit. EUCELION !

Euc. Speak !

Spirit. What would'st thou hear ?

Euc. From whence

Thou com'st, and what thy being ?

Spirit. I must trace

The pathway to my dwelling thro' the clouds:
My being is the state of those who live
Free from the earth-robe of the grave, which once
Darkened and chained me.

Euc. Spirit of the past,
Breathe yet the tone that triumphs; and oh! tell
Why quittest thou thy starr'd abode, where all
Of life and beauty hath its fount, to walk
Thus on the dust that hath not kindred with thee?

Spirit. To visit thee I come, to gaze and speak,
To hear thy voice, EUCELION!

Euc. Moon-bright shadow,
Call'st thou me hence to live with thee, and such
As wear thy mien, and have thy thoughts, and shine
With all this light that makes me from our world
Shrink, and from all things here—from womankind?
Oh, wilt thou that I follow in thy cloud,
To look on thee for ever?

Spirit. I hear not
So blest a mission from those happier courts
Love-circled, where the stream of faultless song
Flows in its sunny and undying course,
And whence descendeth on thee the desire
Blazing in golden joy upon thine aspect,
The high, the fetterless, and fierce desire,
The impulse of a heart warm with its heaven,
And seeking its own shore of stormless rest.
This love of prouder and more glorious things
Than earthly attributes is young within
Thy breast, amid whose images it grows,
The glowing child of all-pervading sense,
Nursed of the soul in yet its tenderest time,
By thee to be baptiz'd in one sweet flood
Of happiness, like that where angels lave
The limbs that bend before the water's god!
Guard thou, oh! guard this soul-fed spark, and deem
That, star-like, it will guide thee o'er the deep,
And soothe destruction's whirlwind.

Euc. Oh, heart! oh, sense! the mastery is your's,
I cannot bind ye to me, yet my hands
Shall lift them to thee, creature of the skies,

As if to pray thee but to chase the thrill
Of this too sweet delirium from the veins
That burst beneath the love-draught of thy presence.

Spirit. Mark thee, EUCELION, ere the high moon makes
An hour's progress, I will whisper thee
A tale sealed up in silence, but which now
Is spoken in fulfilment of a wish,
A wish my heart once knew, ere its last blood
Was drank by passion's fire. EUCELION, I,
While yet the grave's death-battle was unwon,
Had hoped to meet thee thus, to speak the tale
That died not when the fading world was past.
To breathe these words I visit thee and earth :
Bow not before me ; hear, arise, arise !

*(A strain of exquisite music is heard, and EUCELION,
subdued by its influence, falls at the base of the co-
lumn.)*

Euc. Speak, lest my list'ning, quiv'ring soul escape,
And my crush'd sense but warn thee to thy sphere,
Oh, partner of the free !

Spirit. Arise, arise !
The hope I formed was traced on glory's page,
The pray'r I raised hath gained me all it sought ;
And now in lone communion, and beneath
Those watchful beaming planets, I will bare
A past heart's mystery.

Euc. Oh, let the tale,
Voic'd by thy lips be mine, where not an ear
Can snatch away a sound.

Spirit. It tells of one
Who lived with Grecian maids, and lived and loved
Life and its gifts ; but when a change had thrown
A shade upon her mind, she died away
Swiftly but sweetly, and this mouldering shrine
Formed her chill death-bed, and was dew'd by breath
Her last and purest. 'Twas of love she died,
A hidden burning passion, but her cheek
Became not pale ; her eye remained undimm'd,
And none perceived that soft declension.—Once,
Once only he, her thoughts bright idol, flitted
Across her sight ; she saw him, loved, and fell

A sacrifice on feeling's blotless altar !
 EUCELION ! thou, with whom I thus commune,
 Thou wert the chosen idol of ICYNTHÉ !

Enc. Ha !

Spirit. Printed on her mind, thy features, form,
 And all idea can create, were mingled
 E'en with ICYNTHÉ's being, and soon that,
 Which wakened life, destroyed it ; she was thine,
 EUCELION, thine in heart—for thee she perished.

Enc. Oh, lovely SPIRIT, tell me, tell me more ;
 Say, was she beautiful ! Oh, if her eyes
 Resembled thine in ardour and in light !
 Oh, if her hair look'd flowing thus, her face
 A glass that shewed the heav'n of purity,
 Say, had her breath the charm that rides on thine,
 And chains the loose desires of the sense ?
 Oh ! she was perfect, for thy looks have pity.
 And hath she perished ?

Spirit. She was thine in thought ;
 Her features were as mine ; her form was stamped
 Like that on which thou gazest ; and her eye
 With soul-expression filled for thee, EUCELION !
 The moon hath gained a station in the sky,
 That silent tells our parting time—farewell !
 Beneath the shadow of yon cypress branch,
 Upon a sculptured stone, lies the sole token
 ICYNTHÉ's love bequeath'd its living object ;
 Be it thine own—remove the silver'd leaves
 That screen it from thee.

*(EUCELION obeys, and discovers upon a fragment of
 the building a resemblance of himself.)*

Spirit. 'Twas ICYNTHÉ's pencil
 Marked out thy features, and ICYNTHÉ's heart
 That lent the copy it had snatched from thee
 In the first moment of affection. Here,
 In this still solitude, she gave an hour
 Of each congenial sunset to disclose
 The fervor of her fond devotion—then,
 Then when the latest touch had thrown upon
 The picture thine own semblance, she concealed

The offering there, and sought the icy shrine,
Whose bosom quenched the burning brain that pressed it !

Euc. Stay yet, oh, pity-burthened SPIRIT ! back
With this intrusive mist that grows towards thee.
Thou wilt not shrink ?—Oh, say not 'tis a scene
Imagination conjures, lest my eyes
Be sightless with the sound.

Spirit. Farewell ! no more
My feet may pace the earth of which they are not.
ICYNTHE's love is spoken, and her spirit
Waits for EUCELION !

Euc. Oh, stay, ICYNTHE !
Ah, will she not unfold her form, and light
The deep hereafter that hath risen now ?
Give but a word——

Spirit. 'Tis past, ICYNTHE rests ;
In life she saw thee once, and once in death !
Farewell.

Euc. And once in death ! Oh, speak again,
Thou art ICYNTHE !

Spirit. EUCELION !

(*Solemn music—the SPIRIT gradually disappears, and
“EUCELION” is twice pronounced in low accents.
He bends upon one knee, and then endeavouring to
call upon the name of ICYNTHE falls senseless.*)

May 10, 1823.

DRAMATIC NOVELS.

No. IV.

ORIGIN OF “NO SONG NO SUPPER.”

MR. DRAMA,

*I think your readers will derive some amusement from
the following extract from a curious old pamphlet, which
lately fell into my hands among some old books ; it is
clearly the origin of one of the most popular, and de-*

servedly so, entertainments at our theatres, which has kept its station in public favour for many years—"No Song no Supper." I shall not give it more preface than by saying, that "The History of the famous Friar BACON, containing the wonderful things he did in his life," furnishes the extract I have given below.

*I am, &c.
T. W.*

London, April 6, 1820

How MILES, Friar BACON's Man, conjured for Meat, and got some for himself and his Host.

MILES chanced one day upon some business to go about six miles from home, and being loath to part with some company which he had, he was belated, and could get but half way home that night. To save his purse, he went to the house of an acquaintance of his master; but, when he arrived, the good man of the house was not at home, and the woman refused to give him a lodging. MILES seeing such cold entertainment, wished that he had not troubled her; but, being now there, he was unwilling to go any further, and therefore endeavoured to persuade her to give him a lodging for that night. She told him, she would willingly do it if her husband were at home, but he being out of town, it would not be very creditable to her to lodge any man. "You need not mistrust me," said MILES; "lock me in any place where there is a bed, and I will not trouble you till I rise to-morrow morning." The woman, fearing that her husband would be angry if she denied so trifling a request to one of his friends, consented that he should remain there, if he would be locked up. MILES was contented, and presently went to bed; when he heard the door open, upon which he rose, and peeped through a chink of the partition, and saw an old man come in: this man put down a basket which he had on his arm, and kissed the woman of the house three or four times. He then undid the basket, and pulled out of it a fat capon ready roasted, some bread, and a bottle of good old sack; these he gave to her, saying, "Sweetheart, hearing thy husband was out of town, I am come to visit thee; I am not come empty handed, but have brought something to be

merry withal : lay the cloth, sweet honey, and let us banquet." She kindly thanked him, and presently did as he bid her ; but they had scarcely sat down, when her husband knocked at the door. The woman hearing this was amazed, and knew not what to do with her old lover ; but, looking at her apron-strings, she immediately hit upon an expedient to extricate herself from her difficulty. She put her lover under the bed, the capon and bread she put under a tub, the bottle of wine she put under the chest, and then opened the door, and with a dissembling kiss she welcomed her husband home, asking him the reason that he returned so quickly. He told her that he had forgotten the money which he intended to have taken with him, but on the morrow betimes he would begone. MILES saw and heard all this, and having a desire to taste the capon and wine called to the good man. He asked his wife who that was ; she told him an acquaintance of his, who entertained a lodging there that night. He bid her open the door, which she did, and MILES came out. The husband bid him welcome, and desired his wife to put some meat upon the table ; she told him that there was not any ready, but begged that he would wait till to-morrow, when she would provide them with a good breakfast.

" Since it is so, MILES," said the good man, " we must rest contented, and sleep away our hunger."

" Nay, stay," said MILES, " if you are hungry I can find you some good meat ; I am a scholar, and have some art."—" I would fain see it," said the good man.—" You shall presently," replied MILES. He then pulled a book out of his bosom, and began his conjuration in this manner :—

" From the fearful lake below,
From whence spirits come and go,
Straightway come one, and attend
Friar BACON'S man and friend."

" Comes there none yet?" quoth MILES, " then I must use some other charm."

" Now the owl is flown abroad,
For I hear the croaking toad,

And the bat that shuns the day,
 Through the dark doth make her way;
 Now the ghosts of men do rise,
 And with fearful, hideous cries,
 Seek revengement from the good
 On their heads that spilt the blood:
 Come, some spirit, quick, I say,
 Night's the devil's holyday:
 Where'er you be, in dens or lake,
 In the ivy, yew, or brake,
 Quickly come, and me attend,
 That am BACON'S man and friend.
 But I will have you take no shape
 Of a bear, a horse, or ape;
 Nor will I have you terrible,
 And therefore come invisible."

"Now he is come," quoth MILES, "and therefore tell me what meat you will have, mine host."—"Any thing, MILES," said the good man.—"Why, then," said MILES, "what say you to a capon?"—"I love it above all meats," said the good man.—"Well, then, a capon you shall have, and a good one too. BEMO, my spirit that I have raised to do me service, I charge thee, seek and search about the earth, and bring hither straight the best of capons ready roasted." Then he stood a little, as if he had attended the coming of his spirit, and on a sudden said, "It is well done, BEMO; he hath brought me, mine host, a fat capon from the king of Tripoli's own table, and some bread with it."—"But where is it, MILES?" said the host; I see neither capon nor spirit."—"Look under the tub," quoth MILES, "and there you will find it." He did so, and, to his wife's great grief, brought out the capon. "But," said MILES, "we still want some comfortable good drink; I think, mine host, a bottle of Malaga sack would not be amiss. BEMO, haste thee to Malaga, and fetch me from the governor a bottle of his best sack."

The poor woman expected that he would betray her and her lover, and therefore wished that he had been hanged when he first came into her house. Having waited a short

time as before, MILES said, "Well done, BEMO; look behind the great chest, mine host." He did so, and fetched out the bottle of sack. "Now, then, MILES," said he, "sit down, and welcome to thine own cheer. You see, wife, what a man of art can do; get a fat capon and a bottle of good wine in a quarter of an hour, and for nothing, which is the best of all: come, good wife, sit down and be merry, for all this is paid for; I thank MILES."

She sat, and could not eat one bit for anger, but wished that every morsel they ate might choke them. Her old lover, who lay under the bed all this time, expected every minute that MILES would betray him.

When they had eaten and drunk well, the good man requested MILES would let him see the spirit who had procured them this good cheer. MILES seemed unwilling to comply, alleging, that it was contrary to the laws of art to let an illiterate man see a spirit, but yet for once he would indulge him; but, in that case, he must open the door, and soundly beat the spirit, or else he would be troubled with it hereafter; and because he should not fear it, he would make it assume the form of one of his neighbours.

The good man told him he need not doubt his valour, he would beat him soundly; and for that purpose he took up a good cudgel, and stood ready for him. MILES then went to the bed-side, under which the old man lay, and began to conjure him with these words;—

"BEMO, quickly come, appear
Like an old man that dwells near;
Quickly rise, and in his shape
From this house make thy escape;
Quickly rise, or else I swear
I'll put thee in a worser fear."

The old man seeing no remedy but that he must come forth, put a good face on it, and rose from under the bed. "Behold my spirit," quoth MILES, "that brought me all that you have had! Now, be as good as your word, and cudgel him soundly."—"I protest," said the good man, "your devil is as like goodman STUMP, the tooth-drawer, as pomme-water is like an apple. Is it possible that your spirit can take other men's shapes? I'll teach this to keep

his own shape." With that he beat the old man soundly, so much so, that MILES was obliged to stop him, and put the old man out of doors. After some laughing they all went to bed; but the woman could not sleep for grief that her old lover had received such ill usage for her sake.

MR. DRAMA,

When you have a corner in the Drama unoccupied by more worthy productions, the appearance of the following will oblige

Your's, very sincerely,
G. J. DE WILDE.

TO MRS. FITZWILLIAM

ON HER MARRIAGE.

" Felices ter, et amplius,
Quos irrupta tenet copula; nec malis
Divulsis querimoniis,
Supremâ citiùs solvet amor die."

Hor. Ode XIII, Lib. 1.

And thou art wed? Well, may thy lot
Be ne'er to wear a clouded brow;
The page of life should have no blot
That speaks of one so fair as thou.
And thou art wed? We may not now
Turn on that form love's ardent gaze,
Nor at thy shrine with feelings bow
Warmer than frigid reason's praise.

Oh! thou hast many a heart, I ween,
In hopeless fondness left to ache,
Bound by that soul-ensnaring mien,
In chains they vainly sought to break.
Alas! for those who thus could make
A hope for ever now destroy'd,
What torture from such dreams to wake,
To find the heart left dull and void.

Oh ! gifted with the power to draw
 From all the sympathising tear,
 And when the heart afflictions gnaw,
 Its hours of misery to cheer.
 To memory for ever dear
 Will be each light heart-cheering part,
 And still the lay sounds in mine ear,
 When burst the hapless maniac's heart.(1)

Yes ! well didst thou the woes present
 Of her whom love and cruelty,
 Left with each finer feeling rent,
 A thing of madness—misery.
 'Twas dreadful : thy keen agony,
 Thy infant's grave, when bending o'er,
 Reason flash'd o'er thy brain to be
 Estranged more wholly than before.

Farewell ! thy histrionic art
 Of myriads the applauses tell,
 But there's a more enchanting part,
 In which the rest thou wilt excel :
 Pure as thou art, and amiable,
 Thou'lt make a paradise of life,
 And many a heart with envy swell,
 In that sweet part—the faithful wife.

Mary-le-bone, 1823.

G. J. DE WILDE.

MR. DRAMA,

In answer to your correspondent, C. D.'s inquiry, " for some information relative to an *eminent* performer of the name of J: DOVE, *alias* DANCE," I enclose you the following sketch of his life, which is extracted from " The Thespian Dictionary, 1802."

Your's, &c.

April 1, 1823.

J. W.

JAMES DOVE, dramatist and actor, whose real name was DANCE; he was one of the sons of Mr. DANCE, the city

(1) *Madge Wildfire*, " *Heart of Mid Lothian*."

surveyor, whose memory will be transmitted to posterity, on account of the clumsy edifice which he erected for the residence of the city's chief magistrates. This, his son, received, it is said, his education at Westminster School, whence he removed to Cambridge, which, it is believed, he left without taking any degree. About that time a severe poetical satire against Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, then minister, appeared under the title of "*Are these Things so?*" which, though written by Mr. MILLER, was ascribed to POPE. To this young DANCE immediately wrote a reply, called "*Yes, they are; what then?*" which proved so satisfactory to the person, whose defence was therein undertaken, that he made him a handsome present, and gave him expectations of preferment. Possessing all the vanity of a young author, and all the credulity of a young man, he considered his fortune established, and neglecting every other pursuit, became an attendant at the minister's levees, where he contracted habits of indolence and expense, without obtaining any advantage. The stage now presented itself as an asylum from the difficulties he had involved himself in, and, therefore, assuming the above name, he made his first essay in strolling companies. He afterwards performed at Dublin and Edinburgh, and at the latter place he resided some years as manager. At length he received, in 1762, an invitation to D.L.T. where he continued during the remainder of his life. In 1765, with the assistance of his brother, he erected a new theatre at Richmond, and obtained a license for performing in it, but the success thereof by no means answered his expectations. He died in the beginning of 1774. He neither as actor or author ever attained any degree of excellence: his performance of *Falstaff* was by much the best. His productions are "*Pamela*," a comedy, acted at Goodman's Fields, 1742; "*The Village Wedding*," a pastoral entertainment, acted at Richmond, 1767; and "*The Lady's Frolic*," a comic opera, acted at D.L. 1770. For Richmond Theatre he altered SHAKESPEARE'S "*Timon of Athens*," 1768; and MASSINGER'S "*City Madam*," 1771.

THEATRICAL INQUISITION.

“ The drama and its concerns, performers, their adventures and memoirs, excite a much greater share of curiosity than attaches to any other pursuit or profession. The church, all important as it is ; the law, all engrossing, as every one feels it to be ; the agricultural interests, whether elevated or depressed, yield in comparison with the stage and its votaries.”

NEW DRURY LANE THEATRE.

Journal of Performances, with Remarks.

April 28.—Cymbeline—Chinese Sorcerer.

29.—Guy Mannering—Ibid.

30.—Othello—Killing no Murder.

May 1.—Rob Roy—Halt of the Caravan—Simpson & Co.

2.—Merchant of Venice—Swiss Villagers—Love, Law, and Physic.

3.—Marriage of Figaro—Deaf as a Post!—Simpson and Co.

5.—Othello—Chinese Sorcerer.

6.—Cabinet—Killing no Murder.

7.—Hypocrite—Halt of the Caravan—Simpson and Co.

8.—Venice Preserved—Marriage of Figaro—Devil to Pay—[Benefit of Mr. YOUNG.]

9.—Guy Mannering—Swiss Villagers—Simpson and Co.

10.—Duenna—Halt of the Caravan—Deaf as a Post !

12.—Richard III.—Love, Law, and Physic.

13.—*Travellers ; or, Music's Fascination*—Killing no Murder.

So long a period of time had elapsed since the last performance of this piece, and all, but its only bearable part, the music, had so entirely gone from our memory, that we had persuaded ourselves it was really possessed of some merit ; but all our former loathing came back upon us as the performance proceeded, and we felt angry with ourselves that we could have been so deceived : there is scarcely in the whole range of the drama a production so dull and trivial as “ *The Travellers*.” Without plot or

dialogue, with incidents trite, improbable, unconnected, and incoherent, it only appears as an anomalous hideous creation, merely tending to make the stage and the actors ridiculous. The same causes which once recommended it to public favour still remain and prevail. It has the external of an opera; it has good dancing, good singing, charming scenery, and splendid dresses; and, while it mocks the reason, it ministers not unpleasantly to the senses. For this cause its numerous defects are overlooked, and crowded audiences still appear to feel a pleasure, which, we are certain, can only be derived from the numerous auxiliaries above mentioned, and which are introduced with an unsparing hand. We need say but few words on a piece of this description; in fact, criticism would be useless. Mr. BRAHAM gave the songs, with which the part of *Koyan* abounds, with unequalled harmony and expression. In "*The gratitude I owe*," and "*The trumpet sounds*," and several others, deservedly encored; for he certainly never more advantageously displayed the rare gifts which kind nature has so abundantly bestowed upon him. He introduced also a duet with Miss STEPHENS, written upon PURCELL's ground, and aided by very agreeable variations: this piece was delightfully executed, and was, we think, one of the most effective in the opera. Miss S. as *Celinda* gave the original songs with her usual sweetness and power; and introduced, in addition, her own beautiful and favourite air of "*Tell me, my heart*," from "*Henri Quatre*," besides several others. Mrs. DAVISON, as the *Marchioness Merida*, was one of the few persons in the drama who can fairly be called actors, perhaps she and DOWTON [*Ben Buntline*] were the only ones; her vivacity and animation procured her much applause. FITZWILLIAM's *O'Gallagher* was characteristic; he had a new Irish song given him, which he sang effectually. Mr. COOPER (as a daily print facetiously observed) "walked through the part of the *Chinese Prince* as naturally as if he had been borrowed from the London Genuine Tea Company;" and we ourselves believe Mr. C. has not "a happy knack," as many have, of making the most of a bad part; he is certainly deserving of much better characters than those in which he is, we are sorry to say, too often placed. Miss CUBITT, as *Parazade*, sang her song very well, but was in no ways

imitated by Miss FORDE as *Safie*. These are all the characters worth noticing; for the long *Dramatis Personæ*, with which the opera is filled, from the paucity of the parts, are scarcely deserving even of a general mention; and therefore we take the liberty of dismissing the subject, with merely observing, that the piece was favourably received, and that loud applauses followed the announcement for its repetition.

14.—*Cymbeline*—Swiss Villagers—8*l.* 10*s.* 1*d.* IF QUITE CONVENIENT—[1st time.]

This farce was unequivocally damned. We have no wish to speak ill of the dead, but we must observe, it was justly treated, being devoid of plot or sense, filled with stale puns, old situations, vile language and sentiments, as disgraceful to the stage as to the performers who uttered them.

15.—Travellers—

16.—*Othello*—Swiss Villagers—Deaf as a Post!

17.—Grand Selection of Music.

19.—*Hamlet*—Halt of the Caravan—Love, Law, and Physic.

In consequence of the sudden indisposition of Miss CUBITT, the part of *Ophelia* was performed by Miss M. TREE, by permission of the managers of Covent Garden Theatre.

20.—Travellers—Killing no Murder.

21.—Hypocrite—Simpson and Co.

22.—Travellers—All the World's a Stage.

23.—Pizarro—Ibid.

24.—Travellers—Ibid.

26.—*Othello*—Deaf as a Post!—Love, Law, and Physic.

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE.

Journal of Performances, with Remarks.

April 28.—*Henry VIII.*—*Harlequin and the Ogress.*

29.—*Much Ado about Nothing*—*Marriage of Figaro.*

30.—*As You Like It*—*Harlequin and the Ogress*—[Benefit of Mr. C. KEMBLE.]

A Miss JONES made her first appearance on a London stage in the character of *Rosalind* with considerable success. Without personal attractions of a very remarkable kind, and with, as we suppose, no great experience in the drama, this lady promises to be an acquisition, and displayed fair pretensions for public favour.

The character of *Rosalind* is an arduous one ; to make even a respectable stand in it, is to achieve what would be excellence in any other part. The creation of the poet is so perfect, it presents so rare an assemblage of all that is most admirable and fascinating in the female character—beauty, youth, wit, high courage, seasoned with maiden modesty, and, withal, an air of such enchanting romance is cast about it, that to fill it adequately requires talents of no ordinary description ; it is played too under the disadvantageous comparison which one involuntarily makes between the actress and the *beau ideal* which one has conceived from the perusal of the play. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, Miss JONES was very happy in many passages of the character, and more than respectable in all of them. She has a correct conception of the part, and displays much good sense and judgment in her manner of delivering it ; she seems to possess great natural vivacity, and the forest scenes, in which she plays off her *badinage* at *Orlando*, were perhaps the best in the part. Her chief deficiency is her inexperience ; she wants grace and manner, and her lack of these made her fail in the expression of that fearlessness and self-possession which belong to the innocence of youth, and which is the distinguishing charm of *Rosalind's* character : this it is which makes her the prominent person in the drama ; this impels her to the romantic enterprise which forms its chief incident ; and it is this which commends her so irresistibly to the audience. All that Miss JONES has to learn time and practice will supply ; and we have the less doubt of her keeping a high rank in her profession, because she has nothing to unlearn.

May 1.—Way to Keep Him—Ibid.

2.—Wallace—Ibid.

5.—Macbeth—Vision of the Sun.

6.—Comedy of Errors—Ibid.

7.—Much Ado about Nothing—Ibid.

9.—CLARI; or, the Maid of Milan—[1st time]—The Duel.

A new *opera* under this title appeared this evening. Names, we know, are arbitrary, and therefore it may be somewhat hazardous to question the propriety of giving the title of an *opera* to what is, in truth, a genuine *melo-drame*. But, *opera* or *melo-drame*, this piece is assuredly the most successful, and, in many respects, the most able production of the season at this house. Extravagant, sentiment, impossible situation, and nonsensical fustian are the recognised properties of the *melo-drame*; but "*Clari*," by some marvellous good fortune, is miserably deficient in these excellencies: so far it is a bad *melo-drame*, and no farther. The sentiments are very natural and pathetic, the situations are not at all improbable, and the language, though for the most part rather tame, is passably correct. The incidents are few, and put together with clearness and dramatic tact. The plot turns on the beguilement, sufferings, and sorrow of a meek and beautiful girl, and the hasty guilt and tardy penitence of a high and wealthy nobleman.

Clari [Miss M. TREE] is the daughter of a Milanese peasant, who, under a promise of marriage, has been seduced by the Duke Vivaldi (ABBOTT). The play opens at the Duke's casino, where *Clari* is resident, in solitary splendour, with a cloud of mystery lowering round her character and fortunes. It is her birth-day, and preparations are making by the tenantry to celebrate it with fitting gaiety. The Duke appears. *Clari* entreats the performance of his promises, and he apparently consents. A little drama is performed by the village actors, in which her own sad story is dimly, though unintentionally, shadowed forth. Unable to suppress her feelings, she bursts into a loud outcry, which flings the assembly into "most admired disorder," and betrays the nature of her connexion with the Duke. He remonstrates against this sensibility, and tells her that marriage is out of his power. She escapes by night from the casino, and wanders to her native village. Through the assistance of a youthful friend she procures an interview with her mother [Mrs. VINING], who forgives her. The father [FAWCETT] is inexorable,

and pours forth upon the hapless girl, who stands before him in disguise, the most terrific maledictions. In an agony of grief she flings herself at his feet, and supplicates for pardon. Just then the *Duke* appears to claim her as his wife. The enraged father makes an attempt at the *Duke's* life, which is saved by the interference of *Clari*. Then comes an explanation; and the usual *finale* of reconciliation, forgiveness, marriage, and happiness, follows.

Such is the story of this drama, which, though severely simple, is unbroken by any cross incidents and underplots: the consequence is, that, spite of several pathetic situations, some beautiful music, and much excellent acting, it went off at times rather heavily. In the earlier part of the piece there is a valet and a maid servant, who fling some sprightliness over the scene, and the last act is diversified by the preparations for a rustic wedding. *Vespina*, the maid servant, was very prettily and spiritedly performed by that sweetest and most improving of actresses, Miss LOVE. She sang a lively air in the second act with uncommon felicity; it was loudly *encored*. She had also a duet with the boy, LONGHURST, which was very archly and effectively given. PEARMAN [*Jocoso*] was the lover (who is not?) of Miss LOVE. Miss HALLANDE sustained the part of *Ninetta* very fairly, and sang her only song with considerable success. Mr. MEADOWS, her betrothed, played a rustic booby in the very spirit of stupidity. The scene of the village play is highly interesting, and enabled Miss TREE to exhibit very considerable talent. The first prophetic anticipation of its likeness to her own melancholy story; the slow encroachment of agitation, the hurried and fluttering efforts to keep down her passionate emotions, and the final outbreak of irrepressible feeling in one wild cry of agony, were exhibited with uncommon ability and success. That scene alone was sufficient to place Miss TREE very high in the serious part of her profession. Her subsequent pathetic remonstrance with her betrayer was equally clever in its way; but it was through the whole of the last scene that Miss TREE displayed her power as an actress. We do not remember any thing (with the exception of some scenes of FANNY KELLY) more touching than her tearful supplications for pardon from her stern parent.

The female part, nay the whole, of the audience seemed deeply affected. Whatever be the success of this piece, it cannot but contribute to raise the theatrical reputation of Miss M. TREE very high. In the musical portion of her performance she was equally happy. There are two songs in the first act, the one sad and plaintive, the other joyous and light-hearted, which she sang with great effect. FAWCETT flung a good deal of manly feeling into the character of the father. ABBOTT, as the *Duke*, had a different part to manage. His situation was not calculated to win any favour, his language was cold and unfeeling, and his only chance for gaining any sympathy from the audience, was the doubtful one of being the object of *Clari's* love ; yet he got through it very fairly. Of the music of this piece we are not called upon to say much ; excepting two national (Italian) airs, it was by BISHOP, and was marked with all the tenderness and elegance of that composer. Some of the airs promise to be favourites. We understand that Mr. HOWARD PAYNE is the author (ought we not to say the translator ?) of this drama, and it does credit to his well-known melo-dramatic talent. The curtain fell amidst the unanimous and continued plaudits of a well-filled house.

9.—Ibid.—Vision of the Sun.

10.—Ibid.—Irish Tutor—Raising the Wind.

12.—Ibid.—Vision of the Sun.

13.—Merchant of Venice—Matrimony—Midas—[Benefit of Mr. MACREADY.]

14.—Belles' Stratagem—Barter of Seville—[Benefit of Miss PATON.]

The comedy introduced this lady's sister, Miss I. PATON (for the first time) in the character of *Letitia Hardy*, a character requiring considerable range of talent, great spirit, and great discrimination, and therefore a most arduous one for a young and unpractised *debutante* to assume ; yet the young lady acquitted herself most creditably. We remember that delightful actress Mrs. JORDAN ; it was one of her favourite characters. We do not believe we have seen the play since, and yet Miss I. PATON gave us considerable pleasure in some of the early scenes, in which she mimics the rustic girl, and plays on the credulity of the travelled *Doricourt* : she was warmly and deservedly applauded. The masquerade scene was well played, and the

Minnet de la Cour was danced by her and Mr. ST. ALBIN with inimitable grace. We are not sure that her latter scenes were as much applauded as her first interviews with the high-bred *Doricourt*; but in these latter there is not so much as in the earlier scenes to catch the generality of an audience. On the whole, Miss I. PATON's performance of the fascinating *Letitia Hardy* was most creditable to her talents and judgment; and gave promise of much future excellence, when her talents are more matured.

15.—Clari—Katherine and Petruchio—Irish Tutor.

16.—Ibid.—Vision of the Sun.

17.—No performance.

19.—Romeo and Juliet—Vision of the Sun.

20.—Clari—Ibid.

21.—Twelfth Night—Marriage of Figaro—[Benefit of Miss M. TREE.]

The novelties this evening were the appearances of two of Miss TREE's sisters. One of them, Miss E. TREE, played *Olivia* in the comedy, a character in which there is but little to do, but it requires qualities which are absolutely requisite in other parts, particularly in genteel comedy, namely, a lady-like deportment, a pleasing person, and a just and appropriate delivery. With truth, we can say, Miss E. TREE possesses those points, and made an interesting *debut*; there is a sweetness of tone in her acting which makes her very engaging. Miss A. TREE acted *Cherubino* the page in the opera, and appeared very arch; but her speaking voice requires to be more exerted: she is almost a counterpart in regard to person, manner, and voice, to her sister, our established favourite.

22.—Much Ado about Nothing—Vision of the Sun.

Mr. ABBOTT announced this evening, that, in consequence of the indisposition of Miss LOVE, she would be unable to appear; but that in order to prevent any disappointment, Miss HENRY would speak the dialogue, and Master LONGHURST sing the song, which he did, and received an encore.

23.—Antiquary—Paul and Virginia—[Benefit of Mr. FARREN.]

24.—Clari—Sleep Walker—Duel.

26.—As You Like It—Vision of the Sun.

MINOR DRAMA.

SURREY THEATRE.

This theatre celebrated the Whitsun holydays with several novelties. The first, called "THE BROTHERS; or, the Blood-Hounds of the North," is a Scottish melodrame, the principal interest of which depends on the sagacity of two dogs.

The plot consists in two brothers having fallen in love with the same "bonnie lassie;" and the revenge of the elder brother, who was the unsuccessful lover, and who bribes the captain of a banditti to carry off his brother's wife from her father's house, which is accomplished, and she is conveyed to the cavern of the bandit. Her husband in pursuing her is also taken by the gang, and they are both confined in different parts of the cavern. One of the husband's faithful blood-hounds follows him to the cell; and, in consequence of signs from his master, takes hold of the keys with his mouth which had fastened the chains of the prisoners, they being placed in the breast of the captain, who was asleep in the den. When he gets possession of the keys, the husband sets himself and his wife at liberty, and they escape to a certain distance, and are overtaken by the banditti. A battle ensues, but numbers overpower *James of Lorn* (the hero of the piece), and he is again falling a prey to the revenge of his brother, when the two blood-hounds rescue him by seizing the captain of the robbers. The child of *James of Lorn*, by accidentally losing his guide, falls into the hands of his uncle, who throws him over a bridge into the sea, from which perilous situation he is saved by one of the dogs plunging into the waves after the boy, and bringing him ashore in his mouth. The elder brother, foiled in all his former efforts to be revenged of *James of Lorn*, invites him, his wife, and her father, to a banquet at his castle, which invitation they (somewhat inconsistently) accept. The host, in the mean time, has bribed some of the robbers he had previously been in treaty with, to poison the wine, which is done, and

at the moment the younger is going to drink the health of the elder brother out of the poisoned chalice, a dog makes his appearance in the banquetting-room, and pulls the table-cloth and its contents on the ground. Thus disappointed in all his attempts at revenge, the elder brother stabs himself, and *James of Lorn* is left in quiet possession of his wife.

Some very good tight-rope and wire-dancing by Signor FRANCISCO, MONS. ST. JEAN PARSLOE, and Signora NERINA FERZI, followed the melo-drame.

A pantomime, entitled "*THE GOLD WORSHIPPERS; or, Love, Fun, and Magic*," with some very pretty scenery, particularly the last scene, representing a fleet at anchor, succeeded, and the evening's entertainments concluded with a comic piece, styled "*Maid, Wines, Married Men, and Bachelors*."

The house was crowded, and the quadruped as well as the biped performers acted their parts to the entire satisfaction of the audience.

COBOURG THEATRE.

May 12.—"*MAGNA CHARTA; or, the Reign of King John*." This piece is exactly of the same description as that of "*The Black Prince*," reviewed in our last volume, and the recommendation which its name carries makes it a great favourite with an English audience; added to which, its splendid scenery (although not new), its superb war horses, and characteristic dresses, nightly ensure it loud applause. Several of the incidents of that weak monarch's reign are well represented, particularly the scene of the signing of *Magna Charta* at Runnymede, which, with its attendant paraphernalia of cardinals, mailed knights, crowned kings, nuns, friars, and armed soldiers, is very grand and impressive. ROWBOTHAM, as the vaunting, vacillating, pusillanimous, *King John*, was really excellent, and gave extraordinary proofs of his improvement in the histrionic art: the scene, where he drinks the poisoned chalice, and his ensuing pourtrayal of the dreadful agonies with which he is racked, drew down immense applause.

STANLEY, as "*The Bastard*," disgraced himself and the theatre; he appeared to have been sacrificing too freely at the altar of BACCHUS—the consequence was, the grin of scorn, and derision assailed his ears whenever he made his appearance. SMITH's *Hubert* was decently played; and Mrs. STANLEY's *Constance* was now and then respectable, and would have been more so, had she not too often "overstepped the modesty of nature," and gone beyond the boundary assigned her powers; she shewed no mercy to her own lungs, and it cannot be supposed she displayed any for the ears of her auditors. The ridiculous manner in which she strikes her breast, and her fiendish laugh in the last scene, on beholding the agonies of the expiring monarch, created quite a different effect to that which she doubtless intended. The piece also introduced a Miss GASKELL [*Celine*], as principal singer. Although we cannot congratulate her very highly on holding such a situation at such a theatre, yet, she is an acquisition to the manager, for her voice is powerful and (with the exception of some of her higher notes) sweet; her duets with Mrs. TENNANT gave great credit to them both. SLOMAN had a character of the usual stupid cast, and the rest of the characters did their duty. The piece was well received by a numerous audience, and has been since nightly performed.

19.—"WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT; or, *London in 1370*." This is an old friend with a new face, having been performed some few seasons at Covent Garden Theatre as a harlequinade; but, according to the play-bills, it is "now dramatised with a regard to dramatic interest and moral effect." The story is the same as in the pantomime, and must be familiar to old and young, and the adapter has pretty closely adhered to it. Mrs. POPE enacted the character of the *Fortunate Apprentice*, and the little she had to do was performed spiritedly and well. *She*, or *he*, we should say, was accompanied by a *real* cat, and not, as at Covent Garden, by a dog in the shape of a cat. We regretted, however, the absence of our friends the rats, real or artificial, who were devoured with so much precision, and with so much satisfaction, to the young holyday folks in the aforesaid pantomime; but it might have been beneath the dignity of a melo-drama to have introduced

them. Mr. GALE played *Winterton*, the fellow-clerk of *Whittington*, very ably: this young man is one of the most respectable performers on this establishment. We were much amused with SLOMAN in the part of *Diggory*, a serving man, whose stomach was too capacious for the economical notions of his master, *Mr. Alderman Skinflint*. The scenery of ancient London was appropriate and beautiful, and had a pleasing effect: the whole was received with high approbation.

ROYAL AMPHITHEATRE.

Two new pieces were brought out at this theatre on Whit-Monday. The first was a melo-drama, entitled "*The Man of the Wood, the Fair Maniac, and the Dumb Brother and Sister*." It consisted of three acts, each of which succeeded the other like a play, interlude, and farce, without any connexion or dependence on what went before. Indeed the scenes into which the acts were subdivided were also independent of each other, and seemed arranged only for the purpose of pourtraying some particular trait of character. This want of continuity of interest in a play is not, perhaps, always censurable, as the author is presumed to know the portion of attention for which he should draw on his audience: and if the absence of a plot will answer his purpose, as well as the ingenious contrivance of one, his end is equally attained, and with greater facility. The audience were very much pleased with the medley entertainment, which the piece presents. The variety of amusements was very attractive indeed. Nor were we least amused with the singular *naivete* with which the bills describe the last scene, in which all the parties above-mentioned are brought together, without the assignment of any reason for such an aggregation of persons. The bills solve the perplexity of the audience to account for their appearance, by describing the scene—"The climax of the story reaching to its acme;" and an intimation, that "further explanation would be detrimental to the *denouement*."

A grand melo-dramatic romance, entitled "*Alexander the Great and Thalestris the Amazon*," followed the very

entertaining exercises which the voltigeurs and equestrian company of this theatre perform with such admirable dexterity. QUINTUS CURTIUS records the story on which this piece is founded, in the sixth or seventh book of his *Life of ALEXANDER*. As CURTIUS (whose mind was more imbued with the characteristics of a poet than an historian) recounts the circumstance, it was simply this:—The Queen of the Amazons was desirous of having a son, and as the name of ALEXANDER at that time resounded through the world, she was anxious that such a hero should be the father of the future ruler of Amazonia. The superb equipage and splendid retinue which accompanied her on her visit to ALEXANDER, affords an excellent opportunity for the display of those equestrian evolutions for which the Amphitheatre is so justly celebrated. A very interesting plot is raised out of the circumstances attendant on this visit. The plot is, though not perfectly historical, well-contrived and entertaining, and is admirably suited for exhibiting combats and scenes of pageantry, on a scale of magnitude peculiar to this theatre. The language, particularly that of the Amazonian Queen, is eloquent, and not devoid of energy: the interest throughout is well sustained, and the piece concluded amidst the general applause of a very crowded house.

SADLER'S WELLS.

A series of new entertainments were presented at this theatre on Whit Monday, for the amusement of the holiday folks, who availed themselves in the fullest degree of the privileges of the season, in incessant interruptions to the performance. The first piece was a comic ballet, called "*Arrived at Last*," which went off with no inconsiderable share of success. It was followed by a comic burletta, called "*The Tinder-Box, or Sparks in the Dark*," in which MR. VALR, as *Master Cockaigne*, a poet of the Cockney school, with a most unusual degree of the legitimate Bowbell pronunciation, and that very amusing actress, Miss JOHNSTONE, as *Lavinia Ramsbottom*, a blossom of St. Mary-Axe, contributed with great effect to the laughter and

applause which the piece excited. Miss JOHNSTONE certainly possesses a fund of good sense and irresistible humour in her acting, which entitle her to the commendations of a superior audience. Mr. VINING, as *Serjeant Fromp*, a retired German warrior, was amusing enough. The principal attraction of the evening, however, was a new grand aquatic romance, called "*Nerestan, Prince of Persia; or the Demon of the Flood*," in which Mrs. EGERTON represented the hero. On her appearance she was deservedly welcomed with long-continued applause. Her performance was in the best style of the art. We do not recollect on any occasion to have seen her to more advantage. The piece in some respects reminded us of the "*Vision of the Sun*," and it is therefore with pleasure we state, that the acting of Mr. ELLIOTT, as the *Demon*, and Mr. HARTLAND, as his *Slave*, did not unpleasantly remind us of the similar characters in the more splendid spectacle at Covent-garden. In this piece also Miss JOHNSTONE displayed her talents most effectively. The plot of this "aquatic romance," making all due allowances for its necessary extravagance, was interesting, and some of the scenes seemed to wrap the senses of at least some portion of the audience in perfect illusion. The scenery in general was very good. The feature peculiar to this theatre, of exhibiting a "lake of real water," did not produce all the effect of which we consider it to be susceptible. By a new contrivance, the stage, "with all its attendant scenery," is now raised to the roof of the theatre, and by this means the delay is avoided, which heretofore prevailed in preparing the aquatic spectacle. The burning of the enchanted fortress of the demon, reflected on the glassy surface of this "lake of real water," was rather well managed; but still we apprehend there remains great room for improvement. This scene appears to be hurried over with unnecessary rapidity. The aquatic beings, to whatever class they may belong, whether mermaids or devil-fish, should be taught to seem to swim better. As it is, their presence might be dispensed with, unless they are introduced to render the exhibition ridiculous. Upon the whole, the piece merited the warm reception it met with, and we would advise all those who are desirous of seeing a "black lake represented by real water," not to omit the opportunity which is now again afforded them.

ROYAL VAUXHALL GARDENS.

THIS interesting place of public amusement opened for the season on Monday, 19th May, under the most flattering and auspicious circumstances. It continues under the management of those proprietors who contributed so much to the entertainment of the public last year, by their judicious and liberal arrangements. The same spirit of liberality runs through the whole of the improvements this year, and it now surpasses in splendour and magnificence any thing we recollect. Innumerable alterations have been made, extremely conducive to the comforts of the frequenters of this elegant and fashionable promenade. But it behoves us to speak a little more particularly of these improvements. The first and most prominent of these is a completely-formed stage, of very large dimensions, covered in at top, on which ballets are exhibited, and for which a beautiful drop-scene, by Mr. THORNE, being a view on the Lake Albano, in Italy, has been painted. On the stage, the ballet of "*Cendrillon*" was extremely well performed; the scenery, dresses, mechanism and decorations were new, well managed, and very beautiful, and the juvenile performers, under the superintendence of MONS. HULLIN, gained much and deserved applause. A second spacious erection is a Moorish castellated tower, from which the fireworks are exhibited, and to the very top of which Mr. BLACKMORE makes his astonishing ascent on the tight rope, enveloped in fireworks, and nightly fills all who behold him with wonder at his extraordinary feats. Underneath this castle are large openings for the display of the *Cosmorama's*, consisting of charming views of the bombardment of Algiers, Views of Rotterdam and Paris, and of the Arctic Regions, all very beautifully painted by Mr. THORNE: this gentleman and his assistants have also produced a grand and extensive view of the Bay of Naples and Fort St. Elmo, by moonlight, with an eruption of Mount Vesuvius, exhibiting the mountain in a state of actual combustion with the burning lava issuing from it, and running down its sides overwhelming all before it. The contrast of the faint light of the moon with the glaring red of the eruption, is happily imagined, and as happily executed, and presents a very remarkable and beautiful appearance. In the

same walk, a new hydraulic temple, has been set up with a central revolving column. The interior of the Rotunda is entirely new painted and decorated; the fine pavilion is also beautifully embellished. The entertainments of the evening commenced with a grand vocal and instrumental Concert; the principal performers of which are Miss TUNSTALL, Miss NOEL, Miss MELVILLE, Mr. MALLINSON, Master LONGHURST, Mr. COLLYER, &c. &c. a comic song, by Mr. MALLINSON, on the repeal of the Marriage Act, was loudly *encored*—and a laughable duet between him and Miss TUNSTALL, called "*Polly Hopkins*," was no less well received. A gentleman named BROWN, from the York Theatre, gave imitations after the manner of KEAN, MACREADY, MATTHEWS, MUNDEN, &c. &c. and received his share of general approbation. The fire-works, the magnificent superiority of which last season obtained so much note, surpassed even those in brilliancy, splendour, and magnificence; they are furnished by the same pyrotechnic trio, SOUTHBY, MORTRAM, and HENGLER, who bid fair to beat all other rivals out of the field. In fact, to enter into a minute detail would be impossible, and yet this cursory view of the numerous delights and attractions of this beautiful spot, scarcely does justice to the unlimited liberality and exertions of the indefatigable proprietors. However, from the appearances of the gardens, during the few nights they have as yet been open, we have full reason to expect that those exertions will meet with an adequate reward. Several new supper rooms have been erected, which appear perfectly snug and convenient, but for our own parts, among all the various seats in the garden, we prefer the middle seat in the new pavilion, exactly opposite the orchestra, which, in our opinion, is decidedly the most pleasant and comfortable of the whole. We should observe, that the wines are of the choicest quality and flavour, and what is of immense advantage to *our poor pockets*, very reasonable—flesh, fish, and fowl, also remain at the prices of last season; this gave us (and appears to give all others) the highest satisfaction. We feel a sort of national pride in entering into this description of this favourite place of public amusement, which has been so often brought forward as the practical retort upon the sneers of our flippanc neighbours, against our climate, and the monotony of our

metropolitan amusements, and in observing that nothing of the kind that we have yet seen can in any measure equal or even be placed in comparison with it. To our "Country Cousins" who visit the metropolis at this period of the year to see all the "*fine sights*" we would give a word of advice, which is, not to omit devoting a few hours to Vauxhall, for if they return even after viewing all London beside, without paying their devoirs at this shrine of magnificence, their labour will have been in vain, for they will in fact have seen nothing !

COUNTRY THEATRICALS.

PORTSMOUTH THEATRE.

[Concluded from page 210.]

April 14.—"*Marriage of Figaro*," *Figaro*, by Mr. KEENE, was the most complete failure, and most contemptible acting we ever witnessed ; Mr. KEENE has no voice, but he howled out a song, which would have been ridiculous, had not Mrs. DAVIES outvied him in the absurd at attempting the *Countess Almaviva*. I would recommend Mr. KEENE not to attempt these sort of characters, but to cling to genteel comedy which is his forte ; never to attempt singing, and to leave off that everlasting grin, which distorts a naturally good face, and he will one day be a good performer. I would also recommend Mrs. DAVIES never to attempt singing, and to leave off so palpable an imitation of Miss KELLY's manner, who is about thirty years younger than she is. Miss KELLY's performance of *Susannah* perfectly electrified the house, the character I never saw so well performed : the songs were sang with taste and judgment, and were all encored.—16th. "*Iron Chest*," *Sir Edward Mortimer*, by Mr. COOKE, was as badly performed as it could be. This gentleman is said to be a brother of Mrs. W. WEST, out of respect to whom I forbear saying more of her brother than that I cannot discover any of that talent so often displayed by his amiable sister.—On the 24th was performed by the officers of the garrison for the benefit of Miss KELLY, the tragedy of

"*Julian*," the part of the *Princess Annabel* by Miss KELLY; after which, "*The Duel, or my Two Nephews*," and the "*Actress of All Work*," by Miss KELLY, with two new characters written expressly for this occasion. Every one appeared anxious to demonstrate the admiration of this lady's theatrical abilities, and the excellence of her irreproachable private character.

Portsmouth, April 19, 1823.

F. C—E.

WINCHESTER THEATRE.

MR. DRAMA,

The following prologue was spoken by Mr. SHALDERS at his late benefit at Winchester; if you think it worth preservation, I shall be glad to see it in the pages of your publication. It is the production of a gentleman of this city of considerable talent, who is also author of several excellent pieces that have met with success from the public.

I am, &c. F. CLOSE.

No cunning yet *Iago's* bosom knew,
Nor wore *Othello* yet his sable hue;
Love had not yet in *Desdemona's* heart
Plung'd the dread point of his envenom'd dart;
But anxious preparation 'gan to flow
Its careful wrinkle on each actor's brow,
When thick, mysterious darkness veil'd the room,
And creeping footsteps echo'd thro' the gloom,
A sultry blast oppress'd our heated breath,
And pangs o'ercame us worse than those of death;
We strove the author of our pain to know,
In vain—Life sicken'd 'neath the secret blow!
As helpless thus we lay, a radiant light
Burst like a meteor on our quiv'ring sight;
And in the midst a lovely form appear'd,
Who, high in air, a magic mirror rear'd,
Which shone more bright than the meridian day,
And darting o'er us a Promethean ray,
Set free each victim from the mystic yoke,
As smil'd its mistress, and thus sweetly spoke:—
"Although these features bear the bloom of youth,
I'm old as heav'n itself, my name is *Truth*;

I follow here a fell and artful foe,
Who fain wou'd seize my empire here below,
The cause of all your suffering to explain,
Here see the friend, curs'd author of your pain."
Thus having said, she turn'd her glass aside,
And by its light a ghastly shape we spied ;
His scowling front was a Tartarean page,
On which were written cowardice and rage,
To whose dark frowns the eloquence of Truth,
In solemn tone replied this stern reproof :—
" O, CALUMNY !" (a start convuls'd our frame,
And Truth's fair mirror redden'd at the name,)
" O, CALUMNY ! thy power by hell is given,
And *mine* bestow'd by him who reigns in heav'n ;
The aim of *thine* to rankle and destroy,
To bless mankind of *mine* the good employ ;
All mortal actions keenly I regard,
Avenge the *evil*, and the *good* reward ;
I know that *friendship*, and a *wish to please*,
And not ignoble feelings dictate these.
Thou know'st it too—then 'midst the world's parade
Seek meaner victims for thy thirsty blade ;
For I, when 'tis deserv'd, will e'er assay,
To drive thee *thus* from thy defenceless prey."

As though these words her mirror did inspire,
It sent forth flashes of convincing fire ;
The monster rais'd a shrill, appalling shriek,
And *look'd* those curses which he cou'd not speak,
Then stretch'd his sooty wing in rapid flight,
To reek on other hearts his deadly spite.

So fresh the wound, so recent is the fear,
It whispers that its cause *may* hover *here*.
Oh ! let then lib'ral feelings warm each breast,
And kind indulgence blessing to be blest ;
That apprehension may not damp the glow,
The fires of SHAKSPEARE on his sons bestow ;
And your protection help up to defy
The foul o'erpow'ring breath of calumny.

